

Buckeye Banter

Protecting Youth Identity

In 2021, about 23.9 million people in the U.S. age 16 or older were victims of identity theft. In most cases, minor identity theft goes unnoticed until the age of 18. Minor identity theft occurs when someone accesses a person's information under the age of 18 and uses it to access services or commit fraud. Minor theft is common for several reasons: We do not monitor minor credit scores, minors are likely to share personal information online, click phishing links, utilize public WiFi, duplicate passwords, have a lack of understanding about identity theft, lose smart phones/other tech, and use apps that track personal information.

Scammers access data from the dark web, information collected from data breaches, healthcare, schools, government benefits, or IRS/tax information. There are easy steps to protect minors from fraud.

The Federal Trade Commission for Consumer Safety recommends:

- Checking credit reports
- If under 16 freeze credit by contacting three major credit bureaus
- Use a credit monitoring system
- Ask questions before providing child's personal information

If you're monitoring minor information and you notice suspicious activity do the following: contact companies where fraud occurred, contact three credit bureaus, file a police report, and report theft to the FTC at [identitytheft.gov](https://www.ftc.gov/identitytheft). Taking easy steps to monitor minor personal information can protect their identity.

Written by: Holly Bandy, Family and Consumer Sciences, Stark County



Remembering Donor Day

Besides Valentine's Day, February 14th is "Donor Day", a time to remember the thousands of Americans suffering in need of blood, organs, or other tissues, and to realize we can help.

In Ohio, 17 people die each day waiting for an organ and someone needs blood or platelets every two seconds. Most know that blood donations can be made repeatedly, but people can also donate other tissue, including skin, bone marrow, umbilical cord blood, as well as some organs during their lives.

Those who choose to be living donors do not incur medical expenses for the surgery or hospitalization. Easier than being a living donor, a step that all can take to help is to select the "yes" option to be a designated organ/tissue donor at the Ohio BMV when renewing your driver's license. This allows tissue from "healthy" victims of traumatic accidents to donate upon their death. One such donor can save eight lives and can help heal 75 other individuals.

To find out more about organ/tissue donation or to register at any time, visit <https://lifelineofohio.org/get-the-facts/>. To learn more about blood donation, go to: <https://www.redcrossblood.org/>.

As we consider how we may give a gift of love to those around us this season, let us also consider how we can give the gift of life or healing to someone in need.

Written by: Jennifer Little, Family and Consumer Sciences, Hancock County

SOURCES: Red Cross website. <https://www.redcrossblood.org/donate-blood/how-to-donate/how-blood-donations-help/blood-needs-blood-supply.html>
Lifeline of Ohio statistic.: <https://lifelineofohio.org/get-the-facts/impact-and-stats/>



Healthy Teen Dating Relationships

“I can’t believe they just let us take him home.” I vividly remember making this statement to my husband when we were packing up our firstborn to venture home from the hospital 24 years ago. I had read the parenting books and gathered all the advice but still felt unsure how to parent this newborn. I still feel that way sometimes, 24 years later, that there’s just no manual to navigate all the parenting hiccups that flow our way. One such topic parents may have to address can be explored in February as we recognize Teen Dating Violence Awareness & Prevention month. The Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services defines teen dating violence as a pattern of behavior used by one person in a dating or romantic relationship, to control the other. It may include physical, sexual, emotional/psychological abuse, or stalking, as well as threats of abuse. Above all, this topic requires open and honest lines of communication between parents and young people. Often, opportunities to have simple conversations slowly close as teens become more involved in their friends, sports, social media, and begin to drive. Research from Michigan State University highlighted how intimate partner violence, IPV, is a serious public health problem that can carry life-long detrimental effects on the physical, mental and financial health of survivors.

Reviewed by: Rebecca McGuire, Family and Consumer Sciences, Williams County

Call to Action: February highlights giving and awareness. Beyond Valentine’s Day, it’s Donor Day—opportunities exist to donate blood, organs, or tissue, saving lives. It’s also a time to protect minors from identity theft and educate about teen dating violence. Open communication, vigilance, and informed choices help nurture safety, health, and lifelong well-being.

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Additionally, teens who are involved in abusive dating relationships are often afraid or reluctant to tell their parents or another adult for fear of being judged, not believed or having their experiences minimized. When dating violence goes unnamed, unaddressed and unreported, it often escalates and leads to serious lifelong consequences and health concerns. A study by the Urban Institute Justice Policy Center showed that one in four dating teens had been abused or harassed online or through texts from their partners – “in other words, a young person can be targeted around the clock through technology by an abusive partner.” Take advantage of the charm that surrounds Valentine’s Day on February 14 to have a conversation about healthy relationships now and in the future. For more information on teen dating violence, visit loveisrespect.org or thehotline.org. A list of Ohio’s programs can be found at odvn.org.

Written by: Rebecca McGuire, Family and Consumer Sciences, Williams County

SOURCES:

<https://msutoday.msu.edu/news/2025/02/msu-study-highlights-challenges-for-underrepresented-survivors-of-intimate-partner-violence>
<https://ocjs.ohio.gov/family-violence-prevention/family-violence-resources-professionals/teens-and-dating-violence>
https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/many_dating_teens_are_targets_of_digital_abuse_and_harassment
<https://www.thehotline.org/news/new-national-teen-dating-abuse-helpline/>

A promotional poster for a book club. The text reads: "Join the Buckeye Bookworms in reading: 'Atmosphere' By Taylor Jenkins Reid". It lists the schedule: "Thursdays on Zoom" on Jan. 22, Feb. 5, Feb. 19, and Mar. 5, from 6:00pm - 7:00pm EST. A QR code is provided to learn more and register at go.osu.edu/fcsbookclub. On the right is the book cover for "Atmosphere" by Taylor Jenkins Reid, featuring a woman with long dark hair and sunglasses.